

To the County Council, January 17, 2023

RE: ZTA 22-12

I am writing this letter to express concern about the bikeways in Clarksburg and to ask that you support the recommendation put forth by the Planning Board regarding ZTA 22-12.

I know that a few environmental groups have written to you, essentially asking you to restrict bikeways that are not publicly-funded. I believe this would be a mistake, as it could discourage developers from including bikeways in their plans moving forward. It may also derail parts of the bike master plan. The bike master plan was carefully written and carefully vetted over many years, and is literally award-winning. To undo its now or question its legitimacy would be like pulling the thread on a carefully knitted sweater. Let's not unravel a lot of really good work that has been done by our planners.

It is imperative that we not think of bikes as being for recreation only. Bikes are fun to ride, for sure. But they are also an important element of transportation, and if reliable networks are provided for riding on them, they can be a great way to reduce car traffic.

Researchers have told us again and again that the largest contributions to climate-changing pollution come from the transportation sector.

We need to be supporting as many alternatives to cars as is feasible in this county to become climate-ready. There is a sense of urgency to providing realistic transportation alternatives in the upcounty, especially. We have ignored everything but cars in too much of this part of our county for too long. There is no better time to plan for bike transportation networks than during initial development and we need to allow and encourage developers to build bike lanes and paths and we need to make it as easy as possible. Without safe trails and bikeways, biking just isn't as practical or reliable for getting from point A to point B for large numbers of commuters, families and students trying to get to schools. We should not remove this option from the slate anywhere, including the Ten Mile Creek watershed.

While I understand the impact that impervious pavement can have on water quality, I would urge you to balance those considerations against impacts of increased car traffic and driving. If we can take cars off the road we can contribute greatly to water quality and air quality on a much larger scale. This, too, will have many direct impacts on watersheds throughout our county. When we have ignored or blocked bike lane options in other areas of the county in similar ways it has only led to the building of more roads and more highways. We missed similar opportunities when the ICC was built because many of these same environmental groups categorically opposed all use of concrete and did not allow for a full bike lane component to be added to that new road.

I also note that almost no one talked about bike lane options when 270 changes were being debated last year, and I think that's a similar mistake. Other regions incorporate bike lanes

actively into their transportation planning, and I would hope the excellent Bike Master Plan provides the perfect tool for us to incorporate them into our plans as well.

Finally, I would point out that everything about bikeways and the Bike Master Plan fits within Thrive 2050 and should, therefore, be incorporated into planning.

Please support the recommendation put forth by the planning board, and keep supporting bikeways as outlined in the Bike Master Plan on both public and privately developed and managed properties.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

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